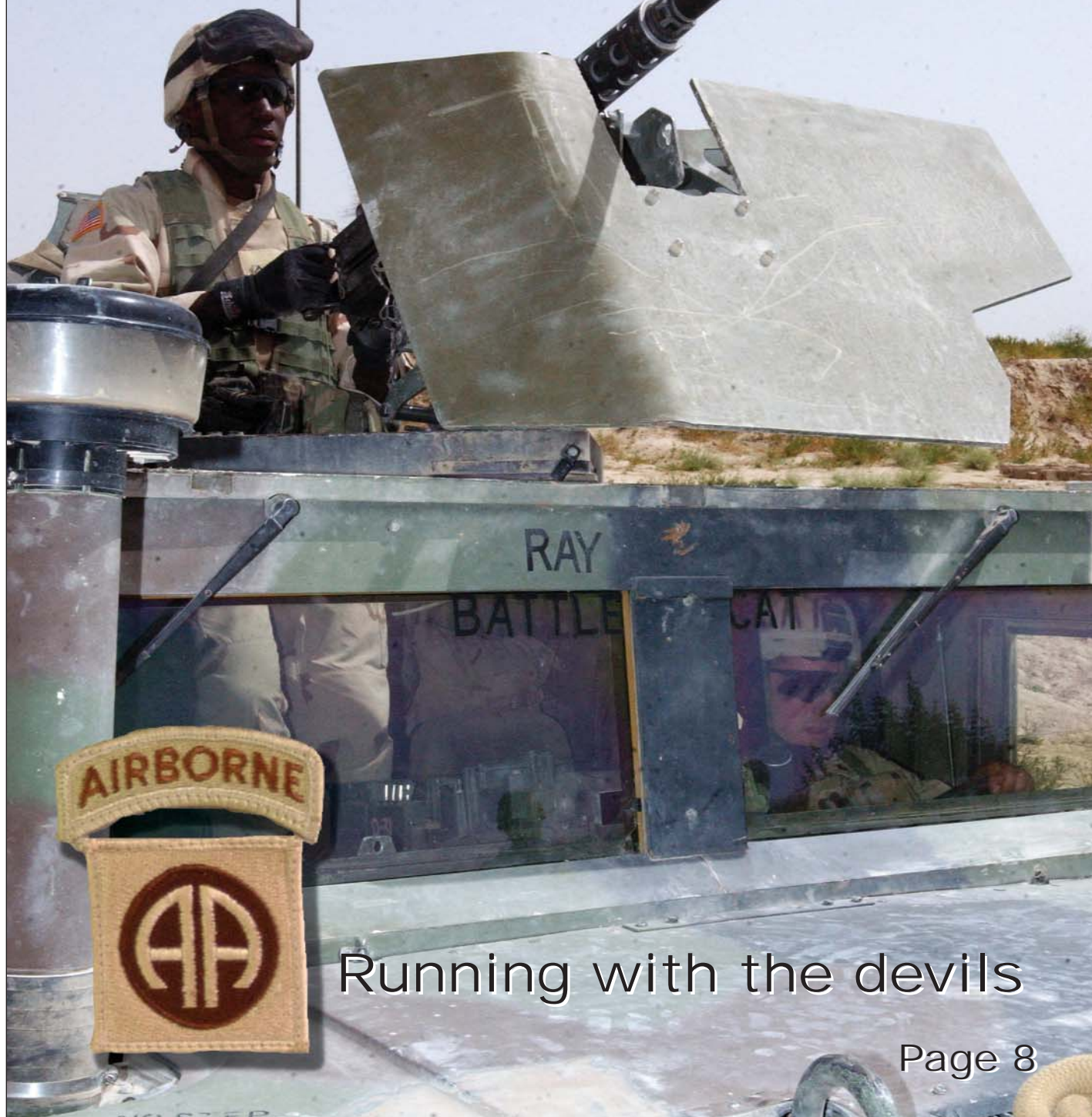


August 1, 2005

Afghanistan **Freedom** Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan **Watch**



Running with the devils

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Photo by Army Spc. Harold Fields



A soldier from the Parwan Provincial Reconstruction Team, hands out clothing and personal hygiene during a Humanitarian Assistance mission at a women's center outside Bagram, Afghanistan on July 18.

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(Cover) Army Pfc. Ray Burns mans a 50-caliber machine gun during a search for enemy in Panjwayi District, Kandahar Province July 12. Burns and other Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, conducted Operation Diablo Fist July 12-14.

Afghanistan Freedom Watch

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U.S. Army Photo

Governor Delbar Arman of Zabul Province convenes a jirga July 10 which brought together the Nasir and Shamulzayi tribes in the Shamulzayi District town of Zangier near the Pakistani border. The focus of the jirga was the settlement of an often violent 36-year land dispute between the neighboring tribes.

Zabul governor unites feuding tribes

First peaceful meeting in 35 years for the Nasir, Shamulzayi tribes

By Army 1st Lt. Thomas Anderson

2nd Battalion, 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment

ZABUL PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Governor Delbar Arman of Zabul Province recently convened a jirga, or council, July 10 which brought together the Nasir and Shamulzayi tribes in the Shamulzayi District town of Zangier near the Pakistani border.

The focus of the jirga was to settle an often violent 36-year land dispute between the neighboring tribes.

The main disagreement between the parties discussed at the jirga focused on land that the Nasir tribe reportedly purchased from the government in 1969, but when the Soviets invaded in 1979, the Nasir tribe fled to Pakistan. In the years since then, the Shamulzayi tribe relocated into the area, and built up the infrastructure, homes, and farmland to support their families. Since the defeat of the Taliban in the

area, the Nasir tribal elders feel the conditions are safe enough to return their families to their former homes.

Both sides presented reasonable claims to the land in question, leaving Arman the possibility of a tension-filled negotiation process.

In the end, Arman was able to facilitate a peaceful negotiation process between the two tribes. The jirga began with the establishment of a truce between the tribes, outlawing physical confrontations against each other under Pashtuwali (Pashtun tribal law).

In a large tent capable of housing more than 100 jirga attendees, the governor negotiated back and forth between individuals, presented proposals and worked toward the resolution of the decades-long dispute.

He surveyed the boundaries of the area in question, and walked with elders from both tribes to other areas that could possibly serve to resolve the needs of both sides. The jirga was

highlighted by the calm, intelligent negotiations conducted by the elders of the two tribes.

Each session concluded by both sides adjourning to tackle the issues in small workgroups, allowing Arman to lead a highly organized and purposeful discussion of issues.

The final outcome of the jirga found the Shamulzayi and Nasir tribes agreeing to follow whatever directives Arman applied with respect to the land rights. Arman, in a gesture of respect to the elders of both tribes, volunteered to accompany leaders from both tribes to Kabul to receive a formal decision from the national government. The tribes agreed to continue the truce past the close of the jirga, continuing the spirit of hope enroute to a peaceful resolution to their conflict.

The jirga "brought two enemies together, and after forty years of fighting, they are now working for peace," said Arman.

Troops work together to defeat enemies

By Army Spc. Tiffany Evans
20th Public Affairs Detachment

PAKTIKA PROVINCE, Afghanistan – During Operation Fury Blitz June 21 - 27, Soldiers worked together to accurately call for fire support.

"On the night of June 24, one of our units radioed that they were receiving mortar and rocket rounds near their position," said Army Capt. Ryan O'Connor, C Company, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment. "After informing us of their situation, they asked for mortar support."

Enemies were using rockets and mortars against U.S. forces, resulting in a chain reaction of events to coordinate a return fire.

Once the call for support was given, all friendly force positions were identified in the area, said Army Spc. Brandon Bates, a fire support specialist for Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 1st Bn., 508th PIR. Knowing where all forces are on the battlefield assures that all assets are out of the Coalition's line of fire.

As the troops called in their positions, the Soldiers being fired on were asked their exact grid location and other questions to determine the direction and trajectory of the incoming rounds, he said.

"With the more detailed information we received, we had a better chance of hitting the terrorists on our first shot," said Bates.

To determine the best coordinates to

place return fire on, forward observers were asked if they could see muzzle flashes from the enemy's position and if they could see where the enemy fire landed, said Army gunner Spc. Michael Cooney, C Co.

Before the mortarmen were allowed

fires and effects coordination cell at the TOC used triangulation to determine the origin of the terrorist's fire, said Bates.

"Once we knew for sure where all our troops were in relation to the enemy combatants and they weren't in danger,



U.S. Army photos

Soldiers Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment prepare to fire a mortar. The Soldiers are part of the battalion mortar platoon.



The battalion mortar platoon Soldiers react after firing a mortar. The Soldiers are part of HHC Co., 1-508th PIR.

to fire, a positive identification of the target needed to be made. The muzzle flash gave U.S. forces positive target identification.

"The tactical operations center in the field listened to the answers and wrote down all the information given to them," said Cooney. "Also, the units in the field would also write down all the information themselves to double check computations."

As the information was being gathered, the forward observers in the field and the

battalion commander gave us the go-ahead to fire," said Bates.

After the first round was fired, forward observers provided information to help adjusting to fire on the target to inflict the maximum amount of damage.

"Sometimes the rounds would be a little off from the target, so the forward observers would tell us where the rounds landed so that we could adjust for the next round of fire," said Bates.

The next day U.S. forces made it to the enemy coordinates and saw that the area had been cleared of casualties, said Cooney.

"We were sure the enemy had been there, but not sure how many were harmed or killed," said Cooney. "All of us working together insured that our calls for fire missions were successful and helped to keep our forces out of harm's way."

Midwives graduate from Nangarhar University

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Curtis Matsushige
117th Public Affairs Detachment

JALALABAD, Afghanistan – Afghanistan has one of the world's highest rates of maternal and infant mortality.

According to International Medical Corps statistics, one in 10 Afghan women die during child birth, and 25 percent of the children do not live to see their fifth birthday.

Midwives represent a new hope for the survivability of infants and mothers. Many rural communities in Afghanistan rely on midwives as the only professional care provider for pregnant women.

The Medical College of the University of Nangarhar in eastern Afghanistan graduated 61 midwives and about 200 other students in other medical professions so far. This class of graduating midwives comes from Nangarhar, Konar, Laghman and Nuristan provinces.

The school thanked the Jalalabad Provincial Reconstruction Team, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and other agencies for helping to graduate such a large number of midwives.

"These agencies and the Jalalabad PRT provided supplies, instructors and facilities for the university and students," said Capt. Mike Weber, a physician's assistant with the PRT and one of the speakers at the graduation.

Amanda Rickman is a program manager for the midwife training. She works for the International Health Center, a

into the program. From this revamp 26 different competencies were identified. Each area must be tested and students must score a 70 percent to pass the class.

Tasks such as handling a breach birth, positive identification of conditions that exist in the mother or unborn infant, and surgical techniques such as suturing are among the competencies.

After Rickman arrived in February and settled into her new duties, she extended the daily course work to a full day so competencies could be completed in a timely manner.

After putting the standards-based evaluation in place, she worked closely with the local hospital to give practical clinical time to these future midwives.

Before the training was over, the class helped deliver a healthy baby and made sure the mother was fine.

Nearly all of the midwives are scheduled to return to their villages and use the practical skills and knowledge learned in this program. That new-found skill will greatly increase the survivability rate of Afghan children and mothers which has ranked as one of the lowest in the world.



Photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class Curtis Matsushige

Graduating midwives at the University of Nangarhar from the provinces of Laghman, Konar, Nuristan represent the potential for better health care and infant survivability.

subsidiary of International Medical Corps, a U.S. non-profit organization providing health care and training in Afghanistan.

Rickman instituted more standards

Enduring Voices

What is the best gift you have been sent while deployed?



Navy Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Matthew Geisler
F Company, 2nd Battalion 3rd Marines
"My family made and sent a DVD to me. Everyone left a personal message for me."



Army Lt. Col. Jay Waters
CJTF-76 Headquarters
"I received a New England Patriots calendar signed by most of the players. It's a true sign of how they are going to be winners yet again this year."



Army Sgt. 1st Class Michael Brewster
3rd Battalion, 141st Infantry Regiment
"We received care packages from the American public. It was a big morale booster to know that the American public cares enough about us to continue to send us things."



Army Capt. Ann Duscombe
212th Military Police Company
"My family sent me a bunch of pictures. They help me to still feel as if I'm part of the family while over here."

Afghan Army Air Corps

Pilots bring helicopters to Bagram Airfield for visit



A Mi-35 Hind helicopter lands at Bagram Airfield for a meeting between the Afghan Army Air Corps and Coalition aviators.

Photos by Army Sgt. Matthew MacRoberts

By Army Sgt. Matthew MacRoberts
20th Public Affairs Attachment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - The heavy thump of helicopters not normally seen in the sky over Bagram Airfield brought curious Soldiers and Airmen out to the flightline July 19.

Afghan pilots and air crews assigned to the Afghan National Army's Air Corps, based in Kabul, flew two Mi-35 Hind and two Mi-17 Hip helicopters to BAF so that they and American service members could tour each other's aircraft and build friendships that will hopefully result in more cooperation between the two countries' air power.

"We are continuing to build our relationship with (the ANA) and will continue to build and improve their capability," said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Timothy S. Doty, the chief of the

Afghan National Army Air Corps Plans Branch, Defense Operations Sector for the Office of Security Cooperation - Afghanistan.

The Coalition has been working with the Air Corps for 19 months. U.S. Air Force, Army and Marines and a French Air Force officer have been helping Afghanistan ready their pilots and aircraft for operational status.

"I hope that our relationship continues to the point where we can conduct joint operations with them," Doty said. "My team and I are flying with them now and see so much potential for missions that the Afghans can participate in, in the future. Technically, what we did today was a form of a joint operation, perhaps the first step toward joint operations in the future."

These types of aircraft have been in use in Afghanistan more than 25 years and many of the pilots and crew have extensive combat experience against the Taliban fighters.

Pilot Muhamed Dawood Salangy, who flies a Hip, fled Afghanistan to the United States during the Soviet War where he learned how to fly. He then returned to Afghanistan to fight with the Mujahideen against the invading forces.

After the Taliban took control of the country, Salangy again fled to Norway and returned to help defeat them. "We have the same goal," said Salangy of the partnership

between Afghanistan and the United States. "We have to fight terrorists, those who would disturb peace here and around the world."

OSC-A is working to establish permanent English language classes for the Afghans but it is a slow process.

"We, my team, are already providing some English lessons in aviation terminology to the Air Corps members and will continue to do so," said Doty.



Afghan helicopter pilots examine an AH-64 Apache helicopter during their visit with Coalition forces July 19.



Army Maj. Kevin A. Vizzarri, a pilot with Task Force Saber, climbs into the gunner's seat of an Mi-35 Hind helicopter.



An Afghan pilot and two crew members stand in the shadow of a CH-47 Chinook while their comrades get a tour of the interior.

one of the Afghan pilots recently told him, "When the Russians were here, we learned Russian. When the Taliban were here, we learned Arabic. Now the Americans are here so we will learn English."

These helicopters are the only air assets the Afghan government has. This will make them indispensable to a host of agencies. The Afghan government's ministries, nongovernmental aid organizations and other foreign organizations will come to rely on the pilots and their aircraft for transportation throughout the country.

Currently they are flying flood-relief missions out of Faizabad Airfield in Badakshan Province with two Mi-17 helicopters, and into Daykundi Province with two Mi-17s at the request of UNOPS in support of the upcoming elections.

"Just last Sunday, we flew an Mi-17 and an Mi-35 to Jalalabad and Staff Sergeant Timothy Giardino, our air traffic controller instructor, taught aviation English to the pilots and air traffic controllers while we flew training missions in the traffic pattern."

There are plans for Giardino to conduct aviation English lessons for many of the crewmembers and maintenance personnel at Kabul Airport.

Doty said that



Army Capt. Matthew Brewster, a pilot with Task Force Saber, talks about flight techniques with an Afghan pilot.

Recent missions also include using an AN-32 Antonov airplane to fly supplies to Faizabad in support of the flood missions, Mi-17 missions supporting flood relief in the Bagram and Gardez areas, Mi-17 missions returning ANA soldiers killed in action to their hometowns for burial, helicopter and fixed wing missions supporting high ranking civilians and officers of the Ministry of Defense and General Staff of the Army, and in February, they flew over 150 Mi-17 missions to the crash site of Kam Air flight 904, moving ANA troops who were providing security at the crash site and recovering the victims of the crash.

The ultimate goal of the Coalition's assistance is to build the Air Corps' capability to the point where Coalition forces can greatly reduce their presence and the amount of assistance provided.



An Afghan helicopter crew member and pilot inspect the main gun on an Apache helicopter during their visit to Bagram Airfield July 19.

Running With the Devils

Photos by Army Sgt. James-Denton Wyllie



Army Pfc. Ray Burns mans a 50-caliber machine gun during a search for enemy in Panjwayi July 12. Burns and other Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, conducted Operation Diablo Fist July 12-14.

Soldiers chase enemy in Panjwayi during Operation Diablo Fist

By Army Sgt. James-Denton Wyllie
20th Public Affairs Detachment

PANJWAYI, Afghanistan — “All American” Soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division have been fighting against terror on the front lines of conflicts since World War II.

Troops from the division’s 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment continued that tradition July 12-14 in a mission code-named Operation Diablo Fist.

For three days, the Soldiers combed through Panjwayi District, Kandahar Province hunting enemies who threaten the stability of Afghanistan.

“We’re looking to either kill or capture them,” said infantryman Army Spc. Matthew Dankert. “They hold key roles in the anti-Coalition movement, and by getting these guys out of the way, we can cripple the ACMs.”

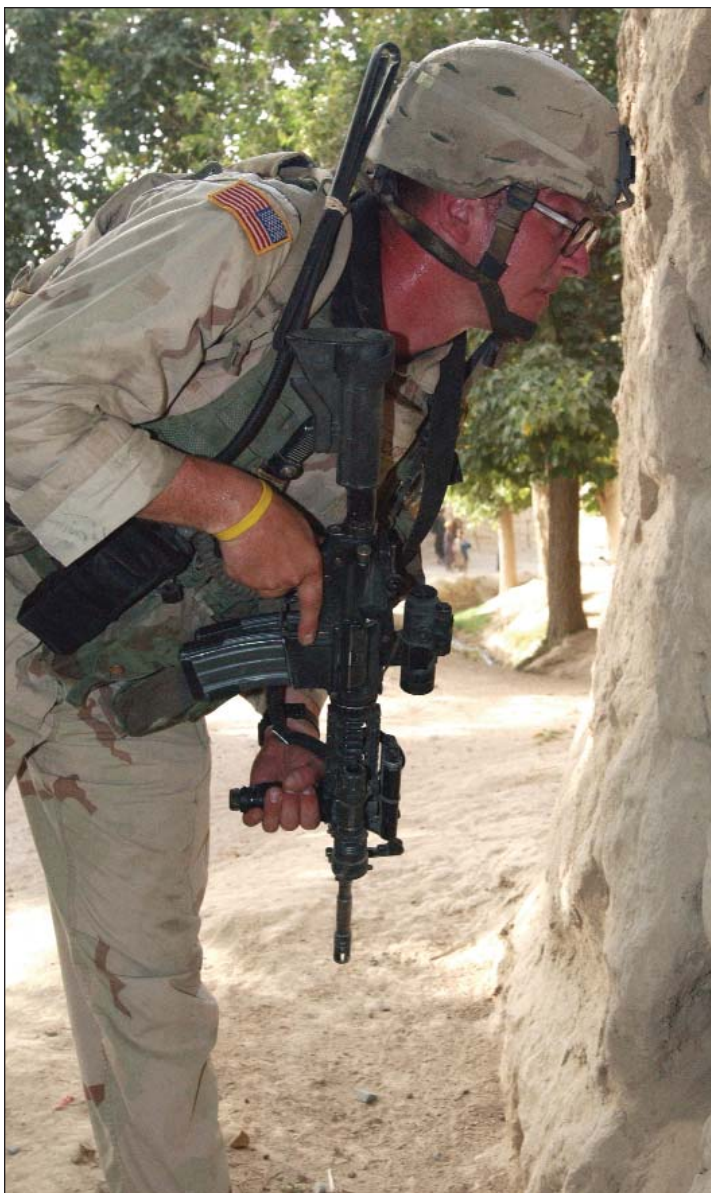
Diablo Fist was the battalion’s third search and capture mission and they ensured that they were prepared for each segment of the operation.

Soldiers stockpiled and checked weapons, communications equipment, medical supplies, food and water. Platoon leaders briefed their troops with situational updates and mission objectives before they departed Kandahar Airfield.



Army Sgt. Shaun McCormick leans against a wall during a rest stop while patrolling in Panjwayi July 12.

“We make sure we do all of our pre-combat checks before we leave so that we aren’t going into a situation



(Top) Army Sgt. Shaun McCormick looks through a hole in a wall during a village patrol in Panjwayi July 12.

(Bottom) Soldiers with the 3rd Platoon, D Company, 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment plan their approach to a local village in Panjwayi July 12.



blindly,” said infantryman Army Staff Sgt. Duane Flores. “Also, missions can be extended unexpectedly, so it’s important for us to be able to continue the mission past the original parameters.”

After a three-hour convoy to Panjwayi, the infantrymen, along with military policemen, Afghan National Army soldiers and French Special Operations

Command soldiers started searching pre-determined villages in the district for enemy. Communicating through tactical radios, the platoons formed perimeters and systematically swept through houses. Near-constant radio traffic allowed the platoons to keep abreast of each other’s movements and adjust tactics for maximum impact.

“There are so many villages to check that it can be hard to search them all,” said Dankert. “We work together to make sure we get them.”

Soldiers from 3rd Platoon encountered a suspected target on the second day of the mission (July 13). Orders to detain him for further questioning came over the radio.

It was later determined that the man was not an enemy combatant and he

was released back to his village.

(Soldiers would have transport the suspect to Kandahar for further processing if his identity had been confirmed.)

Although the encounter with the suspect ended peacefully, the dangers for the infantrymen remain constant every time they go outside the wire, said Flores.

“IEDs (improvised explosives devices), snipers, roadblocks and even livestock and kids in the middle of the road are all hazard that we have to watch out for,” said the infantryman, who has also been deployed to Iraq. “We can’t get complacent. We have to keep our eyes open. Not everyone here is bad, but the goal is to get home safe.”

After the end of the third day, the “All Americans” returned to Kandahar knowing that after a brief rest, they would soon be out hunting for enemy once again.

“There are congressional elections in two months and the soldiers here get to be part of that history,” said 3rd Platoon Leader Army 1st Lt. Alexander Ford. “All of the soldiers know that it is important to spread freedom and stop oppression.”



3rd Platoon leader Army 1st Lt. Alexander Ford checks his map while on patrol in Panjwayi District July 12.



Army Staff Sgt. Jeremy Gates with the 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division scans a field in Panjwayi for enemies target during Operation Diablo Fist July 12-14.

Some interesting facts about the 82nd Airborne Division

On August 25, 1917, the 82nd Infantry Division was formed at Camp Gordon, Ga.

The division was given the nickname "All Americans", when it was discovered that Soldiers in the division came from all 48 states. This is what the "AA" shoulder patch stands for.

The 82nd Infantry Division became the first airborne division in the U.S. Army on August 15, 1942, and the division was re-designated the 82nd Airborne Division.

The 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division earned the nickname "Devils in Baggy Pants" in January 1944. A German officer noted in his diary, "American paratroopers - Devils in Baggy Pants - are less than 100 meters from my outpost line. Seems like the black-hearted devils are everywhere." To this day, the 504th PIR is referred to as the "devils in baggy pants."

In January 3, 1946, the 82nd made its permanent home at Fort Bragg, N.C., and was designated a regular Army division on November 15, 1948.

Through every war and peacekeeping mission since the 82nd was formed, the division has taken a part. In Afghanistan, parts of the division have been in the country since 2001.

Airmen battle elements to keep supply line open

By Air Force 1st Lt. Andrew Schmidt
451st Air Expeditionary Group

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – The sight of a C-17 Globemaster III coming in for a landing at Kandahar Airfield can be awe-inspiring. The 174-foot-long transport drops from the sky in an instant. Its thrust-reversing engines create a thunderous sound that lets all around know it has landed. More importantly, with a payload of up to 170,900 pounds, its vital cargo keeps Soldiers and Airmen at this austere location supplied.

However, with the good comes the bad. The C-17, C-130 Hercules and other heavy aircraft can cause tremendous stress on a runway. The 40-year-old runway here has weathered its share of history, but it received almost no maintenance until after the U.S. arrival in 2001. The constant stress of heavy landings, often in 125-degree heat, has made it susceptible to spalls, cracks and potholes that can shut down the runway for hours – also shutting down a vital supply line.

Despite the nonstop pounding, the Air Force's 451st Expeditionary Civil Engineering Flight has managed to keep the runway open – and south Afghanistan supplied – through hard work, innovation and a lot of sweat.

"Our biggest challenge is getting materials," said Capt. Reid Matsuda, flight commander. "We can't keep a stockpile of materials because of how far out of the way we are. As soon as we get supplies, we use them."

Downtime isn't allowed at this active runway. Civil Engineering troops have to be ready to go out and work furiously at a moment's notice, even in the scalding Kandahar sun.

"We keep materials available in the back of a response vehicle so that we can go right out and fix spalls as soon as they happen," Matsuda said.



Photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman James Fisher

Members of the 451st Civil Engineering Flight mend a runway spall by hand. The 40-year-old Kandahar Airfield requires constant upkeep to ensure that heavy airlifters can land.

"Everything is done by hand – there is no way that you can get heavy equipment on such an old runway without causing more damage. And we have to saw-cut everything with a hand-held concrete saw."

All debris has to be removed by hand as well.

The stifling heat and extreme dryness pose other problems. As soon as concrete is mixed, it dries almost instantly, making using spinning barrels impossible.

"We have to mix everything in five-gallon buckets and pour it straight into the hole," he said. "There's no other way to do it."

Until the runway reconstruction is finished in early 2006, civil engineering Airmen will have to continue to "improvise, adapt and overcome" at

Kandahar. Recently, when paint-stripping equipment stopped working after the flight was tasked with repainting runway lines, the Airmen painted the 3,500 feet by hand, using only rollers and tape, and had the job completed in two days.

In addition to the \$36.2-million runway reconstruction project, new ramps are being built by the 1st Expeditionary Red Horse Group, currently deployed here. The group has been excavating soil and pouring concrete around the clock to provide aircraft parking space.

These ramps will be used by Afghan civilian aircraft once the civilian terminal is handed over at the end of the year, said Air Force Col. Eric Vollmecke, 451st Air Expeditionary Group commander. For this reason, it can truly be said that civil engineer-

ing and Red Horse Airmen are helping to link the country to the rest of the world, he said.

"What I've been so impressed about the Red Horse guys is that they can all do pretty much everything," Vollmecke said. "As a pilot, I admire their ability to jump from one piece of equipment to another and make it happen."

"What these two units are doing is a perfect example of how a support unit can be absolutely key to mission accomplishment," he said. "Nearly all of our supplies are airlifted in. It is absolutely critical for us to be able to provide support to the Army, especially in this time of heavy combat."

"When you look at the impact that just a handful of guys are having on the mission – it's amazing."

Afghan Army's 201st Corps conducts first training briefing

By Army Capt. Cenethea Harraway

Office of Security Cooperation - Afghanistan Public Affairs

KABUL, Afghanistan—The 201st Corps of the Afghan National Army recently presented its yearly training plan to key leaders from the ANA General Staff, a first for any Afghan unit.

The goal was to get feedback on the corps' training process. The training plan was directed by the General Staff in March and based on the staff's annual training guidance. Building the plan allowed the 201st to identify its training needs by focusing on tasks essential to its mission accomplishment.

ANA Maj. Gen. Moeen, 201st Corps commander, presented the plan to Ministry of Defense Lt. Gen. Sher Karimi, the General Staff chief of Operations. Moeen's brigade commanders, command sergeants major and other key leaders were present along with their Coalition mentors.

"Training for any army is the cornerstone to building a fighting force," Karimi said. "For the last three years, the Office of Military Cooperation-Afghanistan and Coalition Joint Task Force Phoenix have trained and built up the ANA. But to see mistakes, shortcomings and flaws in the training, we must conduct evaluations based on programs that are in place on a monthly, quarterly, bi-annual and annual basis."

Moeen presented a cumulative assessment of his corps' past and future training. He was followed by Command Sgt. Maj. Dawoud, the 201st Corps' senior enlisted soldier, and then Karimi ended with closing remarks.

Moeen outlined the corps' training management program, emphasizing current training priorities such as the upcoming parliamentary elections, individual and collective tasks, and leader and maintenance training.

"The biggest shift of leader emphasis was on training, and that was huge," said U.S. Marine Col. Laurent Baker, former director of the Defense Operations Sector at the Office of Security Cooperation-Afghanistan. "The leadership started talking seriously about training in order to get operational capabilities. Everybody from the top to the bottom was on the ground, looking at training."

Dawoud provided a detailed assessment of individual training tasks and of his noncommissioned officer development program, identifying shortfalls to be corrected and strengths to be maintained.

"Two of the individual tasks critical to success in any mission are marksmanship and physical fitness," said Dawoud. "The training will continue to prepare our soldiers for combat with more practice and physical training, using available resources and mentoring."

Dawoud concluded by highlighting the progress of the corps' NCO leader development program. During the past year, 739 soldiers attended the junior NCO course at the Kabul Military Training Center, 22 NCOs attended the combat leader course and 130 senior NCOs attended the senior sergeant course.

Significantly, one of Dawoud's senior NCOs, ANA Sgt. Maj. Roshan, recently graduated at the top of his English language studies class in Texas and is enrolled in the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas.

"The 201st Corps has the capability of transitioning to combat

operations within 36 hours of notification from the Ministry of Defense," Moeen said. "We are successful in our missions because of the quality of training received and conducted by our soldiers."

The 201st has a historic place in the Afghan National Army, being the first operational corps activated in May 2002. The infrastructure of the ANA started there with the fielding of troops, equipment, embedded trainers and mentors.

The soldiers of the 201st have conducted numerous real-world missions and are constantly preparing for deployment operations to preserve the territorial integrity of their country.

The training briefing marked a huge milestone for the ANA as it engages its forces in the detailed process of managing its unit training.

Additionally, by executing their briefing within the 90-day window directed by the General Staff, the 201st set a strong precedent for the four other ANA regional corps to follow when conducting, assessing and evaluating their own training programs.

"The briefing was excellent, by the book, and the way that it was outlined has been implemented in the training throughout the corps," said Karimi.

Those sentiments were echoed by Baker, "This was a first crack at training management, and the 201st Corps hit the mark. It was a 'crawl-walk-run' process, and this was a very good first step."

2 IEDs destroyed, 2 weapons caches discovered

By Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – One improvised explosive device and another suspected IED were discovered by Afghan and U.S. forces July 19 near Orgun-E and Ghazni in eastern Afghanistan.

The device near Orgun-E was discovered by a U.S. patrol conducting security operations in the area. A team of experts from a nearby U.S. base was called to the scene after the device was rendered safe.

The second, suspected IED was discovered by Afghan intelligence agents and reported to U.S. forces. Afghan National Police officers secured the site until U.S. forces could arrive. A team of explosive-ordnance-disposal experts moved the suspected IED to a safe location before destroying it.

Elsewhere in Afghanistan, two caches of munitions were recovered by Afghan intelligence personnel and Afghan police.

The first cache, discovered northeast of Qalat, consisted of 18 anti-tank missile warheads. It was collected by Afghan intelligence agents from locations in the local area. The warheads were taken to a nearby base for destruction.

The second cache was discovered by U.S. forces inside a cave in the vicinity of Bamian and consisted of 50 mortar rounds. Local police secured the site until EOD personnel arrived and destroyed the items.

Medical Clinic travels to patients

By Army Master Sgt. Geoffrey Carter
Task Force Devil Public Affairs NCOIC

KHOWST, Afghanistan – The Khowst provincial government, in conjunction with Coalition forces, donated a mobile medical vehicle to the Ministry of Health in order to provide better medical services and care to remote, isolated regions of Khowst Province.

The vehicle donation ceremony was conducted at the Khowst Ministry of Tribal Affairs. "The reason we are donating this vehicle is simple," said Army Dr. (Capt.) David Harper 2nd Battalion 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment surgeon. "Over the past few months, I have visited many of the villages throughout the Khowst Province and found some of those villages do not have a clinic or a medical provider. With this vehicle, local doctors from Khowst can drive out to remote locations and provide care and medicine to those in need."

The dark blue sport utility vehicle has an elaborate system of drawers built into the back seat and trunk area that can hold cases of medicines and ointments. This storage allows a doctor and one assistant to drive out to any village and set up a clinic in minutes.

"The efforts of the Provincial Public Health Department and the Ministry of Health are examples of the ways the Government of Afghanistan is working toward a better future," said Army Lt. Col. George Donovan, 2 Bn., 504th PIR battalion commander.

"I am confident that as Afghanistan continues to rebuild its government made up of freely elected representatives improvements to public health would only be a part to the overall relief brought to those remote villagers who might be suffering," added Donovan.

As elders were nodding their approval the Minister of Tribal Affairs, Mohamid Tahir Sabar, reminded them that the vehicle will help to maximize the amount of aid that could be brought to the outlying regions of Khowst Province.

Finance Flash Special Leave Accrual



Service members serving in a hostile fire pay area for more than 120 days can keep up to 120 days of leave. Any days over 60 must be used by the end of the third fiscal year from when the service member returns from deployment, or they will be lost.

Leave is charged on a last-in, first-out basis: When you go on leave, you use the days of leave you last earned. This can have tax consequences, because leave earned in a month when any time is spent in a combat zone tax exempt area is "combat zone tax exempt leave." (Each Leave and Earnings Statement provides a combat zone leave balance.) This tax-exempt leave may provide a tax benefit. If the leave is taken during a month when you aren't receiving tax-free benefits from service in a combat zone, then each day of combat-exempt leave taken is tax free. But you won't receive any additional tax benefits for any days of combat-exempt leave taken in a month when you are already receiving tax-free benefits.

Example: You are deployed to Afghanistan for six months and accumulate 15 days of combat zone tax exempt leave. If you leave the theater in April and take leave in April, having already received combat zone tax exclusion for that entire month, you won't receive any additional tax benefit for the combat-exempt leave. If you instead took leave in May, you would receive a tax benefit for that period of leave.



PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

"Our mission in Afghanistan is to help the elections run smoothly and provided extra security. I feel that our mission is important because what happens in this country affects us back in the United States. We need to help them stabilize their country for the good of all," said Army Pfc. David Arnold. Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Joseph Collins, Jr. 55th Signal Co. (Combat Camera)

If you have high-quality photos of service members supporting the Coalition mission or enjoying well-deserved off-duty time, please e-mail them to freedomwatch@baf.afgn.army.mil. Please include full identification and caption information, including who is in the photo and what action is taking place.

'Wolves' replace 'Saints' during Romanian transfer of authority

By Army Pfc. Jon Arguello
Task Force Bayonet Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – After six months of working alongside their American counterparts, the 300th Infantry Battalion of the Romanian Army is going home to reflect on their success. The "Saint Andrew" Battalion, based in Galati, Romania, was relieved by the 151st Infantry Battalion, the "Black Wolves," July 11.

The 300th, which began its deployment in December, built on its reputation of success by working diligently to provide security for Kandahar Airfield and logistics convoys, as well as providing an infantry company to work with Task Force Gun Devil in combat operations.

"The 'Saints' were an essential asset to Coalition forces for the past six months," said U.S. Army Col. Kevin Owens, Task Force Bayonet commander. "They have worked hard and displayed tremendous tenacity while completing their objectives. Lieutenant Colonel Adrian Soci demonstrated excellent leadership and I'm confident that Lieutenant Colonel Vasile Roman, a seasoned commander, will continue to build on the proud tradition the Romanians have established during its participation in Operation Enduring Freedom."

"It was a challenge," said Soci. "I look back at all the missions we've done with Task Force Bronco and Task Force Bayonet and it makes me proud of what we have done. It makes me proud of the soldiers in the battalion. They are true professionals."

"They had to adapt, which they did well," said Romanian Sgt. 1st Class Radu Predescu, the battalion's sergeant major. "They did outstanding."

One of the milestones Soci was most proud of was the completion of the new Romanian compound, which is home to an Orthodox Christian church.

"We made the move in two months and it was a lot of work," Soci said. "In the end, it was very satisfying."

The Romanians won't be leaving Afghanistan empty-handed, said Soci.

"After six months, we have experienced a lot," he explained. "We have established good relationships with the American Soldiers and we will miss working with them and the cooperation."

Predescu agreed. "In the end, we'll forget about the hard parts and what will remain are the results we've accomplished. Working with U.S. Soldiers shoulder to shoulder, fighting for democracy - it has been very gratifying."

The 151st is no stranger to working with Coalition forces in Afghanistan. This will be the Black Wolves' second six-month rotation in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

They have participated in several multinational operations from Africa to the Balkans.

Roman said the 151st is looking forward to getting to work and adding to their reputation.

"We plan on continuing the excellent work that the 300th Battalion has done," said Roman in his speech. "We look forward to adding to our excellent tradition."



Photo by Army Pfc. Jon Arguello

The "Saint Andrew" Battalion, based in Galati, Romania, was relieved July 11 by the 151st Infantry Battalion "Black Wolves."



Dari/Pashtu phrase of the week

Afghan cultural tidbit

Dari/Pashtu phrase of the week:

How much does it cost?

Dari

Qemati yen Chand ast?

(K-mati en chand-ast?)

Pashtu

Da Dai Qemat somra Dae?

(De Da qe-mat som-ra-day?)

Afghan social occasions are predominantly family and extended family affairs. Picnics are important events on Fridays, the official government and religious holiday for Afghans. Many parties are for either male or female groups, and in rural areas of Afghanistan, if both sexes are invited, they often participate separately.

(Source: <http://www.culturalorientation.net/afghan/aeco.html>)

Afghanistan launches new regional air control command

By Central Command Air Forces

KABUL, Afghanistan – History was made for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan with the official opening of the Kabul Air Control Center on July 12 in a ceremony led by the second vice president of Afghanistan.

"This achievement offers significant potential for the people of Afghanistan to revitalize their military and commercial infrastructure in the 21st century, reaping the benefits of today's globalized world trade," said Air Force Brig. Gen. Allen G. Peck, deputy commander of U.S. Central Command's Combined Forces Air Component, during the ceremony.

The Kabul ACC took control of the high-altitude air routes over Afghanistan on May 15, servicing commercial airliners and cargo aircraft over-flying the country, then took control of the low-level routes July 11. By July 15 Afghanistan had handled more than 10,000 aircraft in the high-altitude routes and 500 aircraft in the low-altitude routes.

Each flight generates hundreds of dollars of revenue to improve infrastructure and promote the establishment of a comprehensive aviation structure for Afghanistan.

The ceremony also inaugurated the installation of an instrument landing system at Kabul International Airport. The ILS allows aircraft to land in all types of weather.

"The Coalition maintains a commitment to support this achievement and all goals ensuring the speedy and effective transition of airspace control to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan," Peck said.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony marking the July 11 milestone was hosted by Dr. Enayatullah Qasemi, Afghanistan's minister of transport, at the Kabul International Airport terminal. Afghan school children kicked off the ceremony with traditional songs for the Afghan and U.S. government officials who attended, including Karim Khalili, Afghanistan's second vice president.

IED strikes convoy; four U.S. military wounded

By Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Four U.S. service members were wounded July 16 when their vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device near the Sharona Provincial Reconstruction Team in Paktika Province.

The service members were transported to Forward Operating Base Salerno for treatment. They were treated by U.S. medical personnel for minor wounds.

After moving the vehicle, service members found a battery box with wires leading from the crater.

"These attacks drag Afghanistan backward instead of toward a better, brighter future," said Army Lt. Col. Jerry O'Hara, a spokesperson for Combined Joint Task Force-76.

A team of Coalition explosive experts investigated the incident.



Photo by Army Capt. Denise Price

Army Spc. Jack Daniels from the 450th Civil Affairs Bn. (Airborne), a native Afghan, reads to children at an orphanage during a civic aid mission in Charikar, Parwan Province, June 15.

Religious Services Around the CJOA

Camp Eggers

Sunday
0630 - Christian Worship Service
1030 - Christian Worship Service (U.S. Embassy Marine Lounge)
1430 - Christian Worship Service
1530 - Small Group Study 301
1600 - Small Group Study 201
Tuesday
1430 - Small Group Study 401
Friday
0830 - Latter-Day Saints
1330 - Small Group Study 101
1430 - Coffee House Ministry
Saturday
1130 - Catholic Mass

Camp Phoenix

Sunday
0430 - Catholic (Italian)
0530 - Non-Denominational Prot.
1330 - Catholic (French)
1530 - Non-Denominational Prot.
Tuesday
1430 - Bible Study
Wednesday
1430 - Gospel Bible Study
Saturday
1430 - Gospel Worship Service

FOB Salerno

Sunday
0300 - Foundations Bible Class
0400 - Traditional Prot. Worship
0530 - Catholic Mass
0730 - Latter-Day Saints
0830 - Gospel Service
1400 - Inspirational Movie Night
Saturday
1500 - Contemporary Prot.

Bagram Airfield

Sunday
0400 - Liturgical Prot.
0530 - Roman Catholic Mass
0830 - Latter-Day Saints
0700 - Traditional Prot.
1115 - Korean Language Prot.
1300 - Gospel Service
Monday
1400 - Gospel Choir Rehearsal
Tuesday
1400 - Gospel Bible Study
1545 - Prot. Music Rehearsal
Wednesday
1600 - Catholic Music Rehearsal
Thursday
1430 - Gospel Choir Rehearsal
Friday
1430 - Jewish Prayer
1500 - Women's Bible Study
Saturday
0500 - Seventh-Day Adventist
1330 - Korean Choir Rehearsal
1515 - Roman Catholic Mass
1630 - Prot. Choir Rehearsal
Daily, Monday-Friday
0700 - Roman Catholic Mass
0745 - Noon-Day prayer

Kandahar Airfield

Sunday
0330 - Protestant Service
0500 - Catholic Mass
0600 - Protestant Service (SF Comp. Chapel)
0600 - Orthodox Service (Romanian Orth. Chapel)
0630 - Protestant Service
0830 - Latter Day Saint Services
1430 - Gospel Service
Monday - Friday
0700 - Catholic Mass (When Available)
Wednesday
1530 - Protestant Mid-Week Service
Friday
1430 - Jewish Sabbath Service
1530 - Egyptian Coptic Christian Service
Saturday
1330 - Protestant Service
1530 - Catholic Mass

*** All times
Zulu/GMT**

Freedom Watch
July 25, 2005



Duty
Fulfill your obligations